



Massachusetts WIC Act Early The WIC Developmental Monitoring Project

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) provides supplemental foods, health care referrals, and nutrition education for low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and non-breastfeeding postpartum women, and to infants and children up to age 5 who are found to be at nutritional risk.

Children with nutritional risk factors are at an increased risk for developmental delay. Unfortunately, developmental delays or disabilities are common, affecting nearly 1 in 6 children. WIC staff are likely to encounter children with a developmental delay or disability since WIC serves almost half of all infants in the United States. This makes developmental monitoring at WIC programs an important component of WIC nutrition services.

In August 2021, all Massachusetts WIC programs began implementing Massachusetts WIC Act Early, the WIC Developmental Monitoring Project, into their program's services. The overall goal of this project is to improve the early identification of children with developmental delays and disabilities, so that children and families can receive the timely support and services they need.

Using the developmental monitoring tools provided by the CDC's *Learn the Signs. Act Early.* (LTSAE) program, the Massachusetts WIC Program is equipped to empower families to monitor their child's development by:

- Providing education and awareness about the signs of healthy development through developmental milestones.
- Encouraging families to continuously monitor their child's development using CDC's milestone checklists; and
- Referring families to their child's primary health care provider when there is a concern.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends early and continuous developmental monitoring to ensure timely interventions and improved outcomes. The Massachusetts WIC Program is committed to supporting the AAP's recommendations and partnering with providers across the Commonwealth to ensure all families receive the support and services they need.

To learn more about Massachusetts WIC Act Early,
the WIC Developmental Monitoring Project, contact

Kara Ghiringhelli kara.ghiringhelli@mass.gov or Heather Catledge heather.catledge@mass.gov.